

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban Returns Gaiden

Wintergreen

There were no two ways about it - the girl had a headache.

For the past few days, her manor had been bustling with activity. Activity her parents were very clear that she was to have no knowledge of. This, of course, could only mean one thing. Naturally, her parents had no idea that she knew of their goings-on; what they did under the cover of night. It was pathetic, really - they simply believed her ignorant to everything that took place around her.

She knew exactly what had taken place at the Quidditch World Cup. She knew because she had overheard her parents scheming with the parents and relatives of other 'former' Death Eaters. Oh yes, she was very aware that her parents used to run with Lord Voldemort. They took too much pride in being purebloods. There were too many signs. She had never seen them in clothing that exposed their upper arms, for one.

Sighing, the girl got up from her desk and padded across her large bedroom. It was a nice enough day, if one were to ignore the clouds gathering on the horizon. It was going to be a hellacious downpour once everything was in place. She would probably be soaked at *some* point en route to the Hogwarts Express. And if not before, then certainly after. Why couldn't the station at Hogsmeade have some sort of overhead cover for bad weather?

Opening the two extravagant doors that lead out onto the balcony, the girl leaned against the railing and gazed at the skies. As it so often did when she got this way, the overpowering desire to fly struck her. She didn't know why she sometimes felt like this, as she was never very good with brooms. She had a mild fear of high places, as well, so it was just as well that her House at Hogwarts resided in the lowest regions of the school.

She wouldn't follow in her parents' footsteps. She would never lower herself to kissing the boots of another. She was her own woman and

she wasn't planning on losing that sense of individuality any time soon.

Still... there were rules to abide by, and long as she lived under her parents' roof, she would follow them. As her parents were quite dim, they never realized that their precious daughter was merely an actress in a play of her own design. She would show them, someday. She would break out of her cage and fly - truly fly - for the first time. She would be free...

Brushing a strand of hair away from her eyes and back over an ear, she sighed once more. In addition to coaxing out the desire to fly, gazing at the sky also had another effect on her. For some reason, she associated the endless blue of the sky with the endless green of his eyes. It made her furious, to say the least. Someone as lowly as he making her feel so strangely? Pathetic!

She wanted to break free of more than just the chains her parents were holding her down with - she wanted to break free from whatever spell that infuriating boy had put her under! Surely, he must have cursed her somehow, a feat that shouldn't have been humanly possible. She was never caught off guard. And yet...

And yet her first real kiss had been given to him, freely and of her own will. She had given him some weak excuse. It was the lowest moment in her young life. Her excuse hadn't even been that good - saying he had better keep away from her or else... yet the boy had barely bothered her at all. Well...the pug comment had ticked her off. That was something to hit him for, at least.

It had been a colossal disaster. She had been especially emotional that week for reasons she'd rather not recall. And, having fought with a 'friend' for the better *part* of the week, it had all just flooded out. The fact that he had said that he would risk his own life to save her's had caught her off guard. Extremely so, in fact. But then he had turned around and, in a tone that most people would use to describe the weather or what they had eaten for breakfast, had talked about nearly having died. Many times. But to claim that she would know nothing about caring about those around her? That had been over the line.

He was mysterious, she supposed. Perhaps that was what intrigued her about him. Perhaps it was a 'look but don't touch' quality about him. She shook her head, trying to clear it. Every bloody time she tried to sort her thoughts out, he would inevitably enter them and ruin everything. Ruin seemed to be a recurring theme in her life. One more thing to try and escape from.

She had seen him fly before. He took to the air as though he had been born to move through it. And, while he would gain no points for his landings, which were often painful to watch and somewhat awkward at best, she had never seen anyone cut through the sky like he did. It was almost graceful the way he commanded his movements.

Perhaps she simply wanted to feel that same sort of freedom that he felt when he was flying. Perhaps that was where this strange and new longing for the sky had come from.

"Mistress, you are required in the dining hall." Came a sudden, old voice from behind her.

She jumped, not having heard the house elf appear. Turning, she gave a curt nod to the creature before replying, "I will be down shortly, then."

The house elf bowed low to the ground before vanishing in a **POP**.

Sighing, the girl stepped back into her bedroom, closing the balcony doors behind her. As she crossed the room once more, heading for her expansive closet, she smirked. She would keep up her act for as long as she had to. She would wait for her chance and take it, whatever the cost.

Almost as an afterthought, she dabbed a few small drops of perfume on herself. Her mother had gotten it for her last Christmas and, though she hadn't gotten much use of it, she still enjoyed the smell. A fresh sort of wintergreen, really. After slipping on a deep purple dress - something elegant but not overly so - she headed for the door to her room. She would continue trying to work out her mental blockades later. She often had to cut herself off in mid-ponder.

After all, Pansy Parkinson was often overthinking things. One day - one day soon, if she had her way about it - everything clouding her vision and judgement would align, showing her a clear path to freedom.

And then?

Then she would fly.

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Author's Notes: And episode 2 of the R-Series' sidestory set comes to a close. As with Terry's, this almost takes place during the summer between third and fourth years. Of course, the story won't make much sense unless you've read Prisoner-R, so there you go. This was written entirely after being awake for almost 24 hours, so I apologize if I misused a word or two or didn't catch a typo. That kinda thing.

So who will the next Gaiden be about? Where in the timeline will it fall?

If I told you, it wouldn't be any fun. Would it?